

EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE AUGUST NUMBER

MANY of our readers who have never experienced the inspiration which can only be realized by attending a large convention like the meeting of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae in Boston doubtless opened the August number with some feeling of disappointment, and many, we fear, threw it to one side with but little perusal.

We would say to these readers that upon a more careful examination this number will be found to contain a wealth of interesting and instructive matter. There are helpful suggestions and food for thought in every paper read, as shown by the table of contents, and in some of the discussions valuable points of interest are brought out.

By-laws are, of course, a dry subject, but every alumnae member should take time to go over this part of the report, as she may be a delegate who will have to vote intelligently upon these very questions at some future time.

Later on we shall take up again the question of eligibility, of which brief mention was made in the July issue, but we think it better to wait until the local societies are organized for the winter and are ready to give consideration to this very important subject.

THE future ownership of this JOURNAL is another question discussed at this meeting which will also require wise heads to determine. It will be remembered that THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING was established in the beginning by a committee appointed by the Alumnae Association. It was not until several years had passed, and after ways and means had been most carefully considered, that the JOURNAL Company was organized, composed entirely of alumnae members, and the enterprise floated, with the distinct understanding that the magazine should become the property of the Alumnae Association whenever that association should be in a position to reimburse the stockholders and promoters for their outlay. The company stands ready to fulfil its obligation.

Each year the JOURNAL as a business enterprise becomes more valuable, and the capital required to purchase it increases with delay. The point to be decided, as shown in the discussion, is, Shall the Alumnae Association make a supreme effort to financially own the JOURNAL, or shall it relinquish the idea as being impracticable, leaving the development of the enterprise to the individual stockholders and Alumnae Associations, who are now its financial backers?

WE have been requested to call attention to the note appended to the report of the treasurer, which shows the Alumnae Association to be in arrears financially, reference to which is made in the report of the secretary on page 848 of the August number. This deficiency comes from the failure of members of the profession to promptly purchase the Buffalo congress report, leaving both the

books and a debt in the hands of the committee, who were authorized to proceed with the publication of the proceedings.

The Buffalo congress was the most notable occasion among nurses that has transpired in this country. It brought together women of many nations, and the proceedings and papers as presented in the report make a most valuable reference-book for public and training-school libraries. It should be in the hands of every woman making any claim to membership in the nursing profession.

The Alumnae Association pledged itself to meet a certain proportion of the expense of publishing this report, depending upon the sale of the books for reimbursement, but the individual members have failed to meet their share of the obligation, hence the debt to be met by the association. The situation reflects discredit upon the nursing profession, and should serve as a warning to all nursing organizations to proceed carefully in voting to assume liabilities of a financial character. There is a deal of educating yet to be done before the masses can be made to look upon progressive questions from the standpoint of the few enthusiastic leaders, and in matters where money is to be pledged the condition of the treasury should be given careful inspection before such action is agreed upon.

THE MEDICAL ATTITUDE

SINCE our editorial in the July number, in which we commented upon the ignorance of many medical men of the efforts nurses were making for the advancement of nursing education, our attention has been called to a number of examples of this same ignorance which seems to warrant further consideration of the subject in these pages.

First let us say that our experience and observation would seem to prove that the masses of medical men concern themselves very little about nursing matters. They are liberal in their attitude, willing to grant every privilege of personal or organized effort to nurses in the management of their own affairs, asking only that capable, well-trained nurses shall be provided to take care of their patients. This liberal attitude has been proved by the action of the medical organizations that gave their support to the nurses of North Carolina, Illinois, Virginia, and New York in their recent successful legislation. It would be impossible for the great body of the medical profession to keep in touch with nursing progress in all of its detail, but we do expect the few physicians who interest themselves in nursing matters to keep themselves informed of what is being done by nurses, by hospitals, and by educational institutions along all the lines of nursing progress, whether for better theoretical instruction, more thorough technical training, or upon the lines of what is now known as preliminary training.

In the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* of June 18 Dr. Francis P. Denny, of Brookline, Mass., published an article entitled "The Need of an Institution for the Education of Nurses Independent of the Hospital."

In this paper Dr. Denny has advocated what is known to our readers as the "Central School Idea for Preliminary Instruction to Nurses." It is an able paper, his arguments are forcibly drawn, and with the exception of one or two points we are in sympathy with the plan as he has outlined it, but our criticism is that Dr. Denny does not seem to know that his plan is three years old, that his idea originated in the brain of a trained nurse, a graduate of the Massa-

achusetts General Hospital Training-School, as the result of many years of practical work in the administration of the affairs of a large hospital, and that his arguments in favor of the plan would almost seem to have been borrowed from the editorial pages and from papers published in *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*. That he has heard something of the effort nurses are making in their own behalf is shown in just one sentence, when he says, "There is a movement on foot also on the part of nurses themselves to secure improvement in their education."

How much more powerful the influence of Dr. Denny's paper would be if he could have added his appeal to the efforts already being made in Boston by Miss Davis and the Superintendents' Committee for the establishment of such a course as he describes? By such coöperation with the superintendents of the leading training-schools in that vicinity, who for more than a year have been organized to bring about such a course, the cause would have been greatly advanced. As it is, he enters the field seemingly as an interloper, stealing the thunder of the nurse to whom should be accorded the credit of one of the most brilliant schemes for nursing advancement yet conceived.

Miss Davis's idea, although still untried in Boston, has taken form in Rochester at the "Mechanics' Institute," in Philadelphia at the "Drexel," and we hear it in the air that "Pratt" is ready when the nurses at the heads of the training-schools in Brooklyn will outline a course, that "Cornell" is to be approached, that "Rush" is already working, that "Colorado" is acting, that "Stanford" may consider it, and that even conservative "Harvard" is to establish a "chair of nursing" to be occupied by a medical man!!!

Surely Dr. Denny must have been taking a long nap. Preliminary training, in an institution separate from the hospital, which shall prepare the nurse for her duties in the hospital, which shall relieve the hospital of the burden of providing the theoretical part of her nursing education, has long been recognized by nurses as a necessity.

Preliminary training as it is established in a number of hospitals in Great Britain and at the Johns Hopkins and the New York City Training-School has demonstrated the value of such special preparation to both nurse and hospital, but few hospitals seem to be able to meet the expense of establishing independent departments for such instruction, and the central school, as Miss Davis and Dr. Denny have outlined it, makes preliminary instruction possible for the pupils of all hospitals at a comparatively minimum cost.

We welcome every helping hand in this work, but we reiterate that the two professions of medicine and nursing must be united in their efforts before either can expect to accomplish much for good in the way of nursing advancement.

We must not give further space in this issue to the subject, but we publish in the Miscellany two clippings bearing upon the subject of nursing education, and it will be seen that even the editor of the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, although he approves in a measure of the advanced movement, is a little "foggy" as to what is really being done.

SIMMONS COLLEGE RECONSIDERS

DR. LA FAVOUR, president of the Board of Trustees of Simmons College, has asked for a conference with Miss Davis and her committee. We hope to be able to report that in spite of the delay Boston is yet to have the ideal school

for the preliminary training of nurses, organized upon lines satisfactory to all parties concerned. We understand that the two leading hospitals, the Massachusetts General and the Boston City, are ready to coöperate with the committee as soon as Simmons College will consent to certain conditions that the committee require.

NOT ENOUGH NURSES

WE are informed by the superintendent of nurses of the Lakeside Hospital of Cleveland, O., that the supply of nurses for private duty is not equal to the demand, and that there is room in that section of the country for a number of skilled nurses.

We understand that much difficulty is found in securing competent women for hospital positions in the Middle West, and we would suggest that nurses who are struggling to make a living in the older and more crowded sections should try a new field, where training-schools have not been so long established and the number of graduates is less. We have always advocated nurses from the country going back to their home region, where they are sure of a cordial welcome from the family doctor, and while the amount of money earned may be less, the cost of living is lower, while to feel oneself a part of the community will compensate for much.

We are quite sure that if the managers of hospitals would use the want column of our advertising pages when in search of competent women to fill responsible positions they would easily come into communication with a number from whom to make a selection. We find the superintendents of training-schools in despair over the fact that they cannot supply the demand for their graduates to fill hospital positions, and we frequently know of experienced women who wait for months for a suitable opening. All of this might be avoided if the JOURNAL pages were used more freely by both parties, who are now inconvenienced by not appreciating the avenue of communication that the magazine offers.

POST-GRADUATE SCHOOLS

WE call the attention of those of our readers who have so frequently written to know about post-graduate schools to the advertisements on the training-school want page, where notice of several such schools will be found.

We recommend careful investigation of such schools, because in every instance we do not personally know of the character of the work offered, but we offer the suggestion, as we are not always able to reply promptly to such letters of inquiry.

THE YEAR CLOSES

THE JOURNAL closes its third volume with the present issue. It has been a year of wonderful achievement in the nursing world. In the years to come the pages of this JOURNAL will be referred to as containing the only authentic history of the origin of State registration for nurses in the United States by those women yet untrained who will be accorded recognition as members of an honorable profession because of the work accomplished upon these lines during the past year.

But State registration, like preliminary training and the development of all

the different lines of work which the JOURNAL advocates, is yet in its infancy. The coming year promises to be even richer in interest; progress upon many lines touching every woman in the work will be advanced, and each step recorded in the JOURNAL.

The machinery of the law governing registration will be made clear to our readers. When, where, and how to register; the standards of education agreed upon in the different States, and the laws secured by those States now taking action or yet to do so, will be promptly and officially announced.

The development of the JOURNAL during the past year has been of an exceedingly substantial character, both professionally and in a business way. It now stands as the official organ of six large societies, four national and two State, the Pennsylvania State Nurses' Association having recently adopted it as its official organ. This means that the announcements and reports of these organizations are first made through the pages of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING, and that in no other way can members be sure that such reports are authentic, as the JOURNAL publishes only such proceedings as are officially signed by the secretaries of the different societies.

THE EDITORIAL STAFF

THE editorial staff will remain unchanged, with the addition of Miss M. E. Cameron, who will assume charge of Book Reviews. Her occasional contributions to that department give promise of good things to come. Miss L. L. Dock, the well-known editor of the Foreign Department, is spending the year abroad, and her contributions will be written in foreign lands, from personal observations in many instances.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

THE Editorial Comments express the views of the editor-in-chief upon the topics of most important interest of the month. She is supposed, from her vantage-ground, to see a little beyond the horizon line on some questions, and her endeavor is to make nurses think for themselves by suggestion rather than to definitely advise, to be non-partisan, and at the same time to outline such a policy as shall be in accord with the highest ideals of the organizations which the JOURNAL represents.

THE COLLABORATORS

To the splendid staff of collaborators, to whose efforts are due, in a great degree, the literary excellence of the JOURNAL, will be added the names of Miss Lilian D. Wald, Miss Annie Damer, and Miss S. H. Cabaniss. These are all women of achievement along original lines, and are too well known to the profession to require special introduction to our readers.

TIME TO RENEW

WE wish to remind our readers that the renewals for October should be made at once.

It is almost impossible to estimate the number of new subscribers who will come in with the year, and it is always a matter of deep regret when old subscribers cannot be supplied with back numbers. This can only be entirely avoided by prompt renewals on the part of all.

WHAT WE ASK

WE remind the profession once more that THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING is the only periodical owned, edited, and managed by nurses in the United States. It gives eighty-four pages of reading matter and thirty pages of advertising every month for two dollars.

The managers and editors appeal to the profession to assist them in broadening the usefulness of the JOURNAL. It is a great educational factor in nursing development, and by increasing the subscription list professional growth as well as business improvement is secured, and in just the degree that the JOURNAL adds to its financial strength just so much can its usefulness and literary merit be advanced.

The members of the six organizations who are officially represented in the JOURNAL should, we think, feel themselves under obligation to the management to the extent of becoming subscribers themselves and, if possible, of securing at least one new subscriber. This seems little to ask, but if the suggestion were to be acted upon, the practical result would be surprisingly to the advantage of the JOURNAL.

OUR APPRECIATION

MISS RIDDLE, in her address at the sixth annual convention of the Nurses' Associated Alumnae in Boston, in speaking of the JOURNAL, said: "The enthusiasm of the launching of the enterprise has passed. We now require the gift of continuance in industry."

Miss Riddle, as the treasurer of the JOURNAL Company, spoke with knowledge of her subject. The JOURNAL is now an incorporated business enterprise, to be governed by business principles, to stand or fall in the journalistic world according to its merit.

It cannot be governed by exaggerated ideas of ethics, neither can it be conducted for the benefit of the few highly cultured members of the profession, but it must meet the wants of the great American average in the nursing profession.

It will require wise heads, well-balanced minds, and true business knowledge for its continuance.

To those who have remained with us in industry, untouched by jealousy or criticism, constant, ever ready with a helping hand or friendly counsel, we extend our most heartfelt expression of appreciation.

